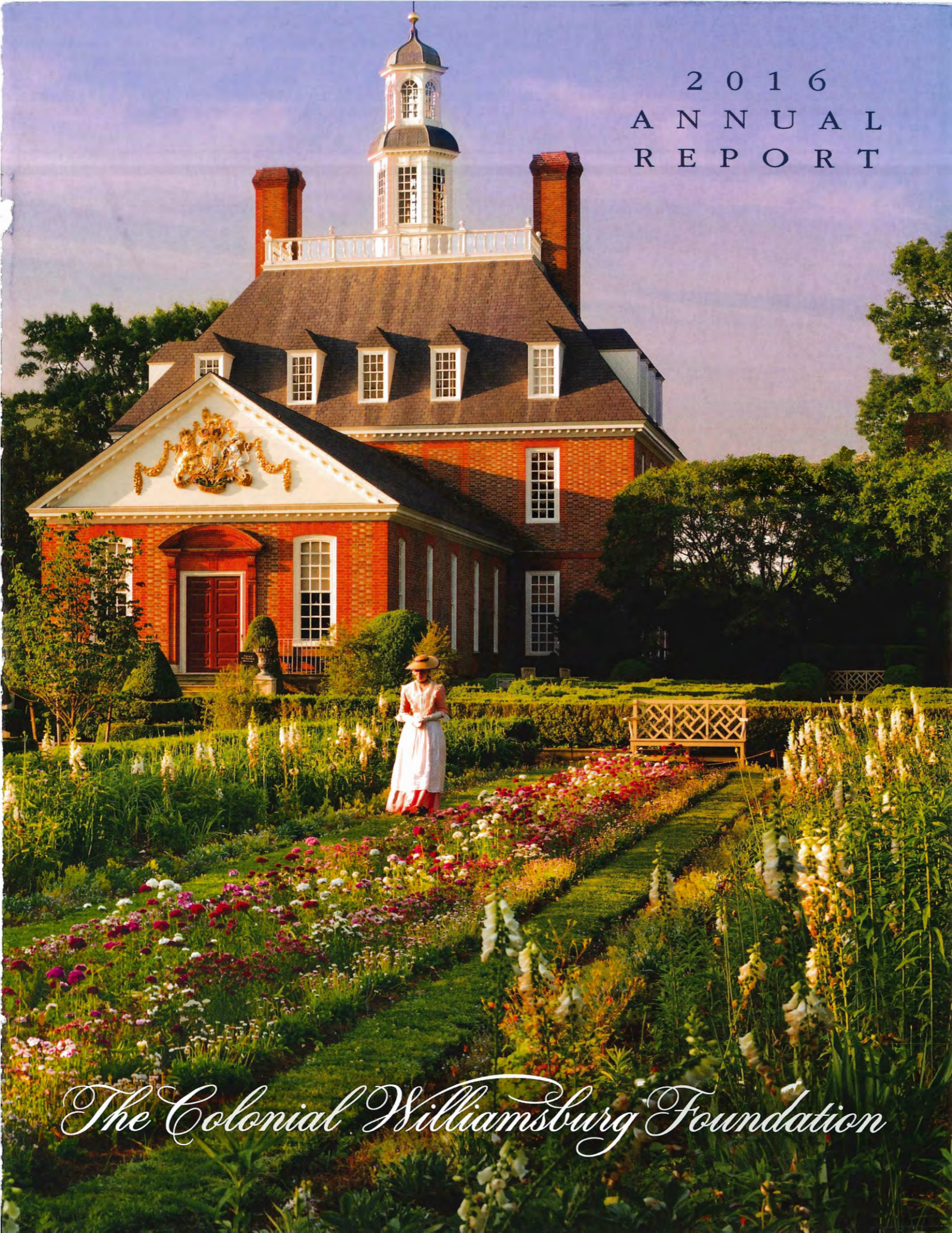
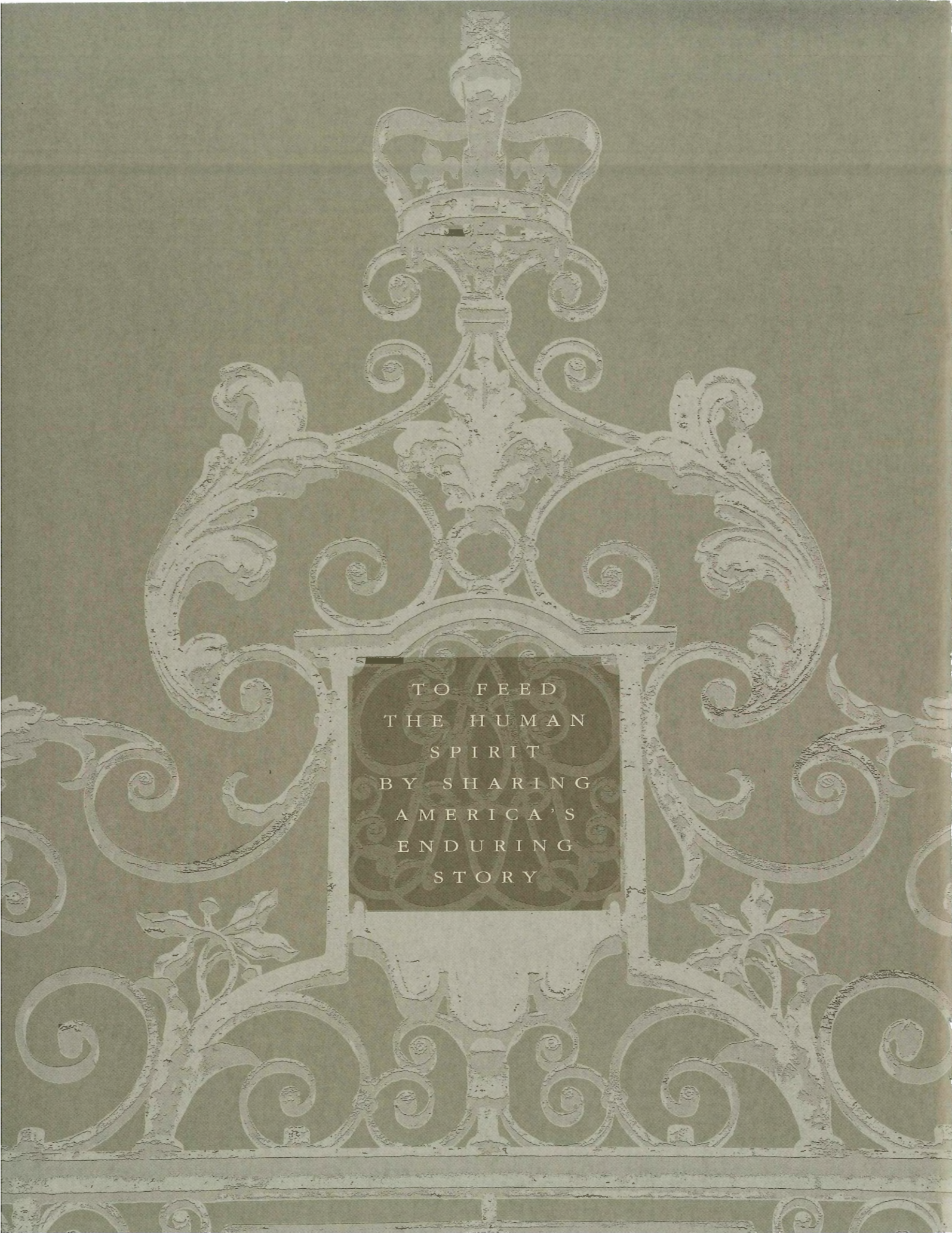


# 2016 ANNUAL REPORT

The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation


TO FEED
THE HUMAN
SPIRIT
BY SHARING
AMERICA'S
ENDURING
STORY

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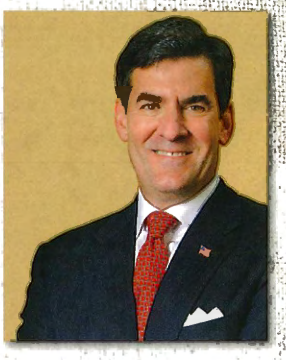
*"I have but one lamp by which my feet are guided, and that is the lamp of experience. I know of no way of judging the future but by the past."*

*— Patrick Henry, 1775*

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Dear Friends,*

*I am pleased to share with you this report on the 2016 programs, operations and finances of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.*



This was the 90th anniversary of Colonial Williamsburg's Restoration, and of our role as America's preeminent storyteller. It is an extraordinary legacy of which we are all extremely proud, and which we were pleased to celebrate with retrospectives on-site and online, as well as in the pages of our magazine. With that reflection, however, comes even greater awareness of the dramatic changes in society and the very public we exist to serve. Our fellow citizens live and learn very differently today than they did 90 years ago, when Colonial Williamsburg's founders embarked on their noble vision for restoring this 18th-century capital city. As both an educational history museum and a world-class travel destination, we ignore these changes at our peril.

The advent of personalized technology has certainly wielded an enormous impact, though the results are not always what one might assume. With cell phones, tablets and the like dominating so much of our lives, Americans have grown hungrier for ***authentic experiences***. It is not a little ironic that even as we struggle to walk to our mailbox without an Android or an iPhone in our hand, we spend increasingly more time and money today searching out active, hands-on experiences — of history, culture and the world in general.

These are the findings by academic, media and business analysts confirmed by a public voting with its feet and its wallet. Immersive travel experiences are in demand; "buying stuff" is on the decline. Multisensory exhibits and demonstrations have become popular; lectures and pageants are not. Hands-on activities, role playing and audience participation are a must for children. Hands-off displays behind stanchions are a bust. Millennials, who today number more than 75 million in America alone, were credited for these trends initially, but today they are in evidence throughout our society.

For museums built on a traditional model of presentation, and with limited means to change course now, these are most unwelcome trends. For Colonial Williamsburg, however, it all adds up to an enormous opportunity to reconnect with America. In the process, we hope we may also help Americans start reconnecting with each other. How? Largely, by doing more of what we do best — as the Nation's largest ***living history*** museum, where informed discussion, debate and engagement have remained cherished traditions for more than 240 years.

It was with all this in mind that we began in 2016 to bring the Historic Area to life as never before. Families who visited last year piled into our new oxcart and caught rides on our expanded fleet of carriages. Many helped us herd our sheep through town. Some guests joined bucket brigades to operate our replica 18th-century fire engine — discovering in the process just how much cooperative effort it took to save a home from fire, a perpetual threat during Colonial times. We created an official entryway to the Historic Area at the Market House, where children played 18th-century games with our costumed staff. Kids also enjoyed puppet shows at the re-created Playbooth Theater. And at dusk, we recruited them to fire the cannons.

At our new musket range, guests aged 14 and over found out what it was really like to handle and fire these Revolutionary-era weapons. We increased the ranks of our Nation Builders to expand the breadth of conversations we can have with guests of all ages. Our historians and curators teamed up with visitors to probe an architectural mystery at the Robert Carter House. Once again, we invited guests to roll up their pant legs to help us stomp mud at the Brickyard and challenged them to "Escape the King," our popular locked-room adventure.

*"Determine never to be idle....*
*It is wonderful how much may be*
*done, if we are always doing."*

*— Thomas Jefferson, 1787*

And at our popular archaeology site for kids, there was plenty of authentic, down-in-the-dirt discovery.

In short: Less lecturing. More doing. We invited all comers, of all ages, to truly ***live history*** with us, in all varieties of ways. By engaging not only their minds but also their senses and even their muscles, we forged new connections with these fellow citizens. In the process, we inspired new reflections on the complex, often courageous stories of America's founding generation, and what it means to be an American today.

As our guests enjoyed this surge of activity, we were quietly tackling some tough questions about the Foundation's primary purpose and goals for the future. You can probably guess why. Over the past two decades, Colonial Williamsburg's visitation has declined. The scope of our programs and outreach increased, however, as did our operating costs. The time had come to respond, swiftly and aggressively, to protect the long-term health of the Foundation.

To accomplish this, we needed a clearer vision. ***What is Colonial Williamsburg's mission?*** When we began asking staff this question in 2015, we were surprised at the variety of answers we received — even from those at the highest levels of leadership. It was clear that while our people were doing great work, we were not all following the same star. If we were to succeed, this had to change. In 2016, a diverse group of employees from throughout the Foundation joined together to create a new mission statement. And after a great deal of brainstorming, discussion and debate, they did just that. In the fall, we adopted their proposal, which I heartily endorsed: ***To feed the human spirit by sharing America's enduring story.***

We believe this succinct, positive declaration opens our arms wider than ever before. It embraces the work of all 2,500 members of the organization — from our costumed interpreters in the Historic Area to our landscapers tending our Colonial gardens and green spaces to the employees providing food, comfort and gracious service in our hotels and restaurants.

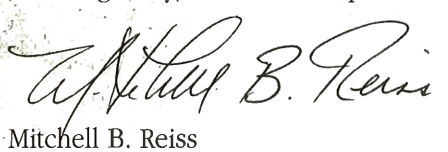
At the same time, this statement embraces a more diverse audience by acknowledging the complexity and continuation of our Nation's history. "America's enduring story" refers not only to our 18th-century history but to its continuing impact down through the centuries. It is an always-growing compendium of stories reflecting the experiences and aspirations of ***all*** Americans. It is a story of both triumph and tragedy, of progress and struggle, and we believe that sharing all its facets feeds the human spirit.

With this mission as our guide, we were better able to identify our priorities. We raised the bar for training our staff, and for developing new programs that creatively engage our guests. We expedited our pace of preserving the historical buildings in our care. We also set new goals to meet our guests' needs for technology and accessibility, began upgrading the menus at our restaurants, and renovated our flagship hotels to win back customers and acclaim.

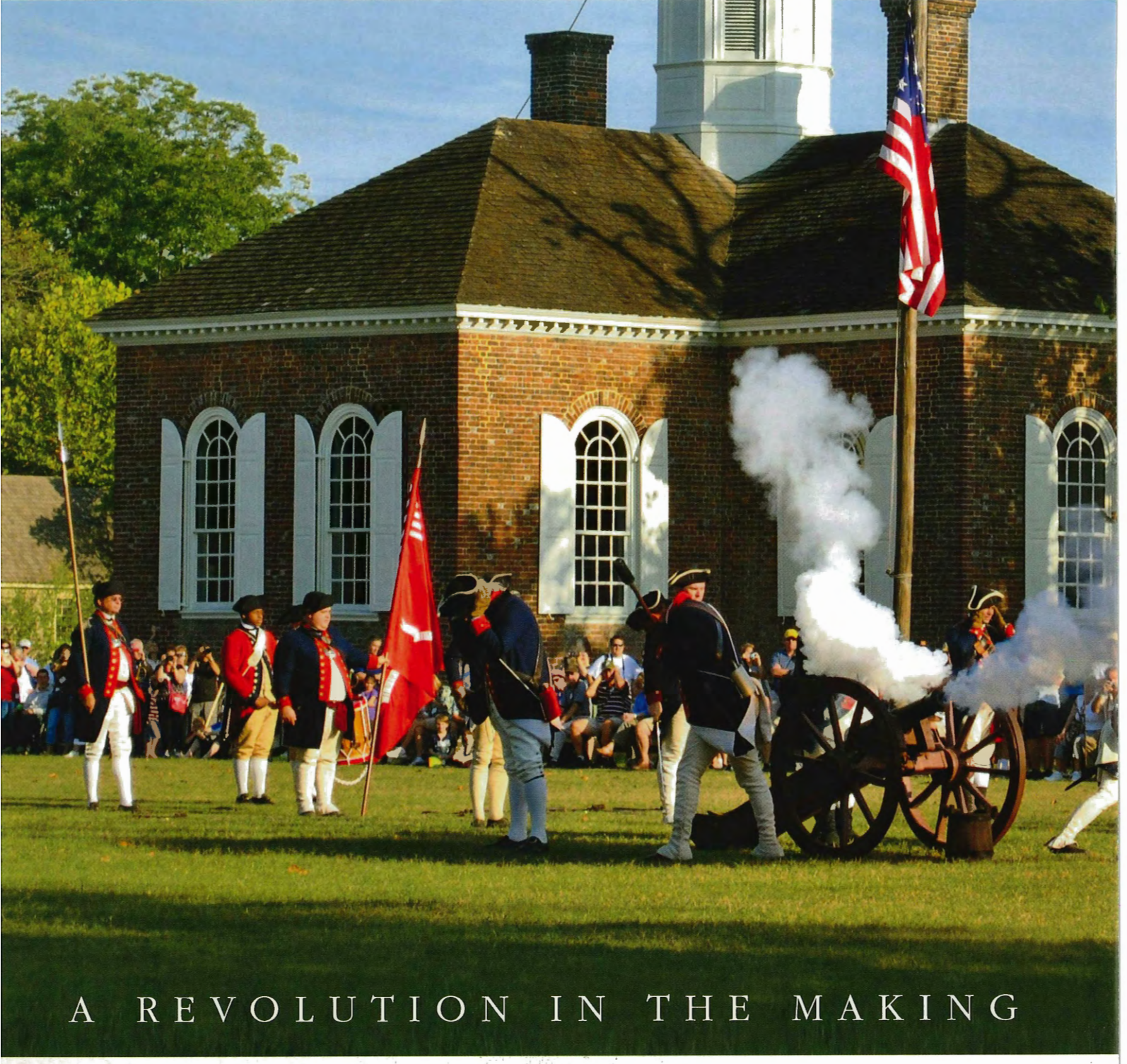
As one of our Board members summarized it, this is our return to "basics." 2016 was a year in which we acknowledged our challenges and began tackling them head-on. We also began channeling our creativity, innovation and financial resources toward deepening and perfecting our most essential, engaging program areas. At times this has required difficult decisions to shrink or discontinue niche offerings with limited audiences or tangential connections to our core mission. In so doing, however, we have been able to meet more critical needs — such as hiring more apprentices in Historic Trades, expanding our American Indian interpretative program and rehabilitating the Governor's Palace gardens.

Today this is an organization united by a clearer vision. We are working together more efficiently so that we may ensure that Colonial Williamsburg remains a vibrant part of the American landscape for future generations.

Thank you, as always, for your generosity and your commitment to preserving this irreplaceable American treasure, and to the educational work of this Foundation. It is your support, and your passion for sharing America's enduring story, that makes it possible.



Mitchell B. Reiss
President and CEO
The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation



# A REVOLUTION IN THE MAKING

***Innovation in engagement*** is paramount in a world where people have less time available, the population is becoming ever more diverse, and the power of technology continues to change the way we live and interact.

"Today's visitors want to be involved, not lectured," said Ted Maris-Wolf, vice president of Education, Research, and Historical Interpretation. "Guests come to Colonial Williamsburg to be connected emotionally and intellectually, but they also want to be entertained."

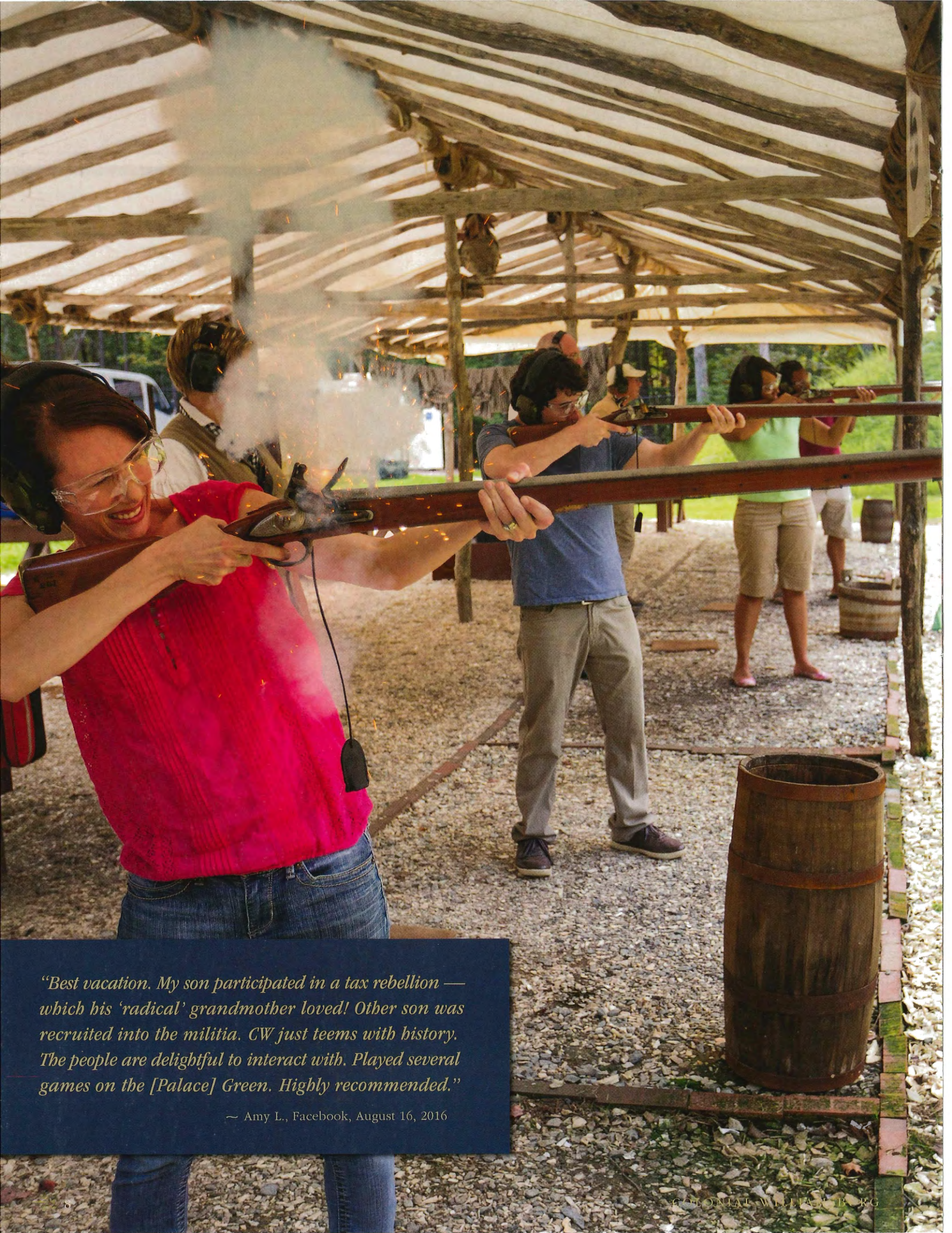
*"That the future may learn from the past."* These wise words of Colonial Williamsburg's founder, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., have guided the work of this organization for decades. In a sense, they always will. But in listening to our guests, and surveying the social and cultural landscape around us, we have

*"Visiting Colonial Williamsburg means reliving a magical childhood."* ~ Karen Laufer, Williamsburg, Virginia

realized that our mission has become more urgent. People come to Colonial Williamsburg today to experience more of life — *18th-century life*, that is. And we are giving it to them.

"Our goal is to turn the Colonial Williamsburg experience inside out — to make all the elements that make this place special and unique available to guests," said Maris-Wolf. "We want our visitors to go behind the ropes, to create experiential moments that last a lifetime. It is an exciting and challenging opportunity in a place like this."

When today's guests arrive at the Market House, they enter a thriving and vibrant Colonial capital city with an ever-increasing range of opportunities to roll up their sleeves and get involved.



*"Best vacation. My son participated in a tax rebellion — which his 'radical' grandmother loved! Other son was recruited into the militia. CW just teems with history. The people are delightful to interact with. Played several games on the [Palace] Green. Highly recommended."*

~ Amy L., Facebook, August 16, 2016

## 2016 HISTORIC AREA HIGHLIGHTS

# UNIQUE EXPERIENCES

Opened in March 2016, the **Colonial Williamsburg Musket Range** is the only place in the country where participants can learn about and fire replicas of 18th-century weapons used during the Revolutionary War.

Through an **expanded Carriage Program** and **new Oxcart Ride**, more than 44,000 guests — a record number — experienced 18th-century travel last year.

More than 10,000 children took part in hands-on exploration through **DIG!**, an introduction to archaeological excavation, and **DUG!**, an artifact washing and conservation program. Participants discovered many artifacts, from an 1857 3-cent coin to a wine bottle seal belonging to 18th-century Williamsburg merchant Thomas Hornsby.

At the Robert Carter House, guests worked alongside the Foundation's historians, curators and conservators as part of the **new Building Detectives** program to get a close-up look at architectural fragments and artifacts. In the process, they learned to distinguish different nail types, saw marks, moldings and joinery details.

Several traditional classics and longtime favorites also returned to the Historic Area, including **candlemaking**, the Colonial **fire engine bucket brigade** and the family-friendly **Playbooth Theater**, featuring original interactive dramatic performances. Junior interpreters returned to the **Brickyard** to help guests build a wall with bricks made on-site.

# DONOR SPOTLIGHT

*"When I first visited Colonial Williamsburg at age seven, people of African descent never appeared in history lessons about the Colonial era. Colonial Williamsburg emphasizes the roles of African Americans, Native Americans, and women — not just as special interest groups to be highlighted one month a year, but as an integral part of the Colonial world. I donate to support Colonial Williamsburg in their efforts to teach visitors that American history is shared history. It belongs to us all."*

~ Dr. Alexia L. Gordon
Lake Forest, Illinois

## 2016 HISTORIC AREA HIGHLIGHTS

# NEW PERSPECTIVES

*"We are trying new things to reach the public in new ways, to capture a new place in the American imagination."*

— Ted Maris-Wolf, vice president of Education, Research, and Historical Interpretation

For the first time, a permanent **Native American encampment** shares the stories and perspectives of this important 18th-century community through hands-on activities focused on food, social life, diplomacy and the military.

As the **Nation Builders program expands to the next generation**, visitors can now meet a young Martha Washington and young Thomas Jefferson. These new characters, along with their senior counterparts, offer a window into the full spectrum of these iconic figures' lives, together capturing both the youthful ambitions and mature reflections of each.

A new **weaver shop**, a new **tailor shop**, **four new masters of historic trades** and an increased investment in **apprenticeships** are just a few of the changes developed to reinvigorate the Historic Trades program. More than 1,100 kids and their parents joined this summer's **The Apprentice!** tours to directly interact with tradespeople at three trades shops.

Telling the story of enslaved people is a calling that requires true commitment. In **Journey to Redemption**, a new dramatic program, our actor interpreters reveal the conflicting emotions and challenges they experience in portraying the enslaved and their enslavers.

# MODERN HISTORY:

## A FOCUS ON THE FUTURE

America's Founders led with courageous vision to redefine their place in a changing world. As it was then, a clear vision remains critical to the success of any serious enterprise or undertaking.

Over the last two years, we have challenged staff at all levels throughout the Foundation to help clarify our vision for Colonial Williamsburg. Together, we have taken a long, hard look at where we have been and, more importantly, where we want and need to go. How will we continue to attract new audiences, engage and entertain our guests, and instill a lifelong love of history, of Colonial Williamsburg itself, and of its unique role in America's story? These have not always been easy discussions; at times they sparked pointed debates. Most of all, they demanded a breakdown of old "silos" that had formed over time within the organization and a willingness to consider new ideas.

In 2016, a diverse team of our employees led the process to redefine our guiding mission. After months of exchanging, debating and refining their ideas, this team proposed what we formally adopted as our new mission: ***To feed the human spirit by sharing America's enduring story.*** This, we believe, is a statement that reflects the efforts of all Colonial Williamsburg's employees, from our historic tradespeople to those working at our hotels, and can guide the entire organization forward.

COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG

## DONOR SPOTLIGHT

*"Memories are why we support Colonial Williamsburg — and we love creating new ones with family and friends. We got engaged in the Moody Kitchen garden and were married in the garden behind the Rockefeller Building. We continue to visit regularly, as we enjoy the peace and quiet of the Historic Area, and there are always new things to explore. We plan to keep coming back when we have children, creating memories with the next generation."*

~ Noelle and Taylor Anderson
Washington, D.C.

*"It's an amazing trip into the past! Everything from the tours down the cobblestone roads through [the] colonial town at night to flower gardens! The best food, and don't forget the endless choices of beer! And that's just Monday night! Give your soul a gift, visit Colonial Williamsburg."*

— Jacob C., Facebook, February 1, 2017

Later that year we adopted a strategic plan that outlined our objectives to support that mission. It is a plan that includes a new strategic partnership agreement with the College of William & Mary, new benchmarks for our interpretive programming; key technology initiatives and fundraising goals, expansion of our museums, and much more. It is, in short, a plan that stresses long-term financial good health for the organization while keeping our efforts clearly focused on preserving and sharing America's enduring story.

That mission includes our outreach beyond our geographic bounds. With the support of our friends, the exceptional work of our Teacher Institute, now in its 28th year, continues. Our popular quarterly magazine, ***Trend & Tradition***, combines several key publications into one that mails to more than 110,000 people and is reaching new audiences via more bookstore newsstands. We continue to publish a range of books designed to fire the interest and imaginations of children and adults alike about America's founding story. And we launched a free online Education Resource Library — our gift to the Nation, designed to significantly improve the access of teachers and families to high-quality history education materials.

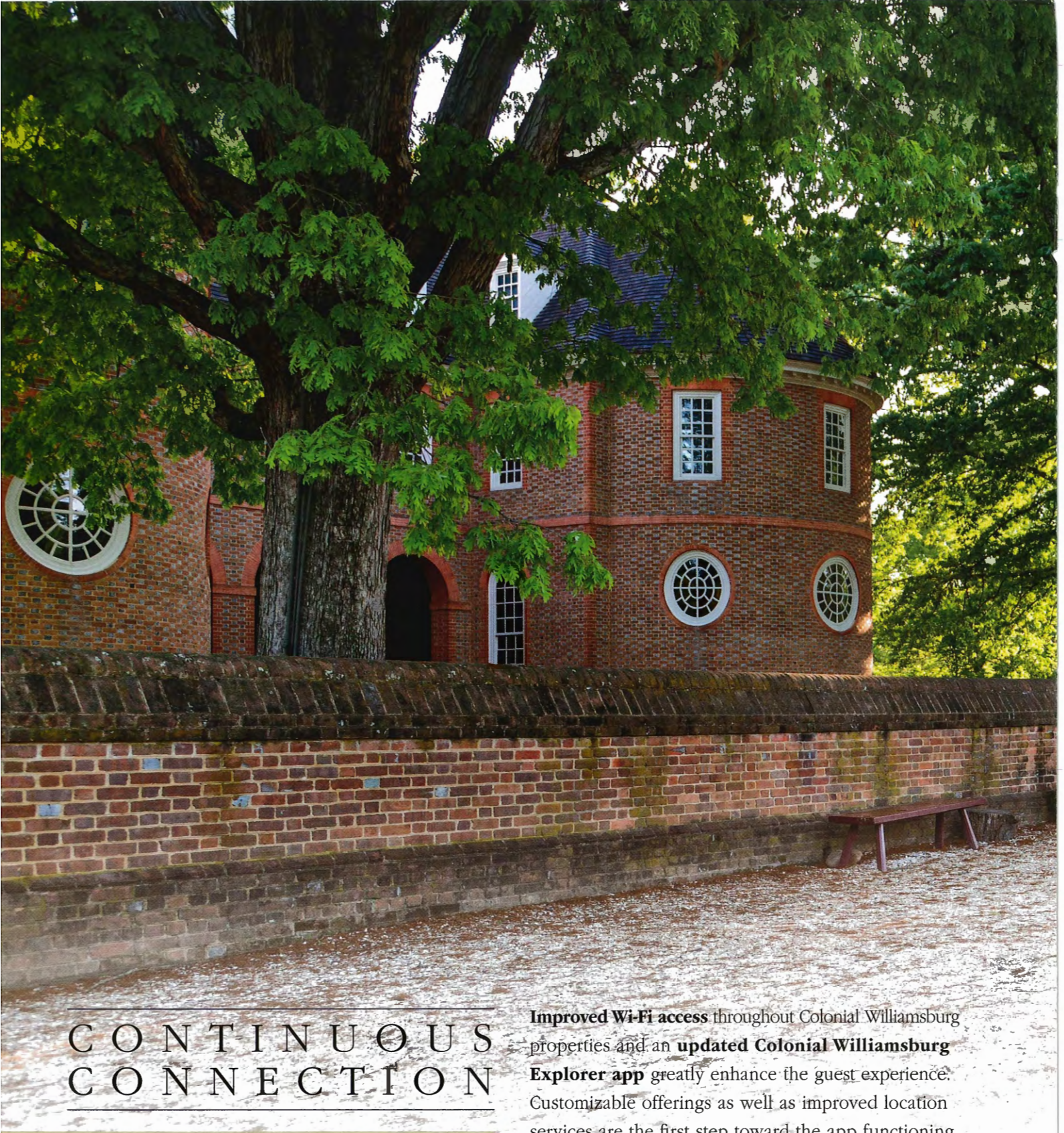
For all those who come to experience all that Colonial Williamsburg has to offer on-site, we will not only tell and show them what life was like during the Revolutionary era, we will enable them to feel, touch, taste, smell and hear it as well.

*"Through the magazine, I am able to feel a part of Williamsburg, even from so far away."*

— Anna Gorka
Lone Tree, Colorado

*"Colonial Williamsburg is a refreshingly different organization today, and I applaud the gains."*

— Charles A. Bodie
Lexington, Virginia



# CONTINUOUS CONNECTION

Download the official Colonial Williamsburg mobile app — **Colonial Williamsburg Explorer** — available at Google Play™ and App Store.

**Improved Wi-Fi access** throughout Colonial Williamsburg properties and an **updated Colonial Williamsburg Explorer app** greatly enhance the guest experience. Customizable offerings as well as improved location services are the first step toward the app functioning as a personalized visitor's center.

**Liberty Lounge** opened in May 2016 to welcome and honor our military service members for helping our Nation uphold the same freedoms and ideals we seek to portray here. Located in the heart of the Historic

*"History comes to life for me and my students when we recognize that it is not a body of dusty, immutable facts, but rather a living voyage of discovery on which we, too, can embark."*

~ Lori McGarry, 2016 Teacher Institute participant, State College, Pennsylvania

Area and staffed by veterans, the lounge has already hosted more than 30,000 active and retired armed forces personnel and their families.

In 2016, the **Colonial Williamsburg Teacher Institute** provided almost 400 elementary, middle and high school teachers from 43 states, Puerto Rico and Washington, D.C., with new techniques, strategies and inspiration for engaging students in history education.

**Liberty's Ice Pavilion**, Halloween's **Haunting on DoG Street** and the canine-friendly **Dogs of DoG Street** are among the popular events that draw many new and returning local community members into the Historic Area throughout the year.

*Come experience these exciting new opportunities for yourself.*
*Plan your visit today at colonialwilliamsburg.com*

## THE ART MUSEUMS OF COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG HIGHLIGHTS

- 3.5 percent increase in museum visitation, the fourth consecutive year of growth
- 240,000 museum visitors in 2016
- 22 percent increase in family programming participation
- $40 million fundraising goal reached for construction of Art Museums expansion
- 22 percent increase in Hennage Auditorium program participation
- National press coverage for two new exhibitions — "We Are One: Mapping America's Road from Revolution to Independence" and "A Century of African-American Quilts"

# DAILY DISCOVERY: LEARNING AND SHARING

Among Colonial Williamsburg's chief responsibilities are preserving and sharing our precious assets. Every day brings new insights and findings — for our ardent team of renowned archaeologists and architectural historians, and for the hundreds of thousands of guests who tour our world-class museums each year. These daily discoveries help shape our collective understanding of our shared historical legacy.

## COLLECTIONS AND OUTREACH

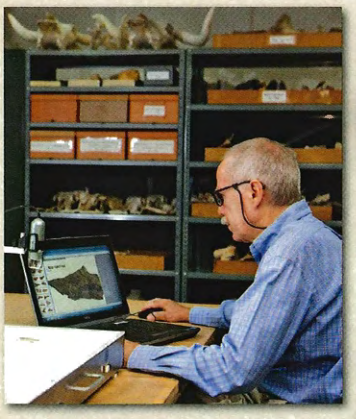
**ART MUSEUMS OF COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG:** With the generous support of more than 66 donors, we completed fundraising for the $40 million expansion of the Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg. With groundbreaking set for April 2017, the art complex's transformational improvements will include a 20 percent increase in much-needed exhibition space to showcase more of Colonial Williamsburg's substantial collections as well as a striking, street-level entrance, improved guest services and ADA accessibility.

**NEW HOME FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS:** As his final gift to the Foundation, the late Forrest E. Mars Jr. underwrote the new Colin G. and Nancy N. Campbell Archaeological Collections Building to be constructed on Botetourt Street, a block and a half north of the Historic Area. With the current 1957 building beyond capacity, the new structure will include more than 2,000 square feet of lab and storage space for the Foundation's six million archaeological materials. Scheduled for an early 2018 groundbreaking, the building will feature public tours, program spaces and exhibits showcasing the most important assemblage of British-American archaeological materials in the world.

**FREEDOM BELL:** The First Baptist Church was founded in secret by a group of Williamsburg-area free and enslaved African Americans in 1776, the same year the Colonies declared their independence from England. The congregation's historic bell, originally purchased in 1886, lay silent for decades until the church reached out to Colonial Williamsburg in 2015 for help with its restoration. In February 2016, the bell broke its silence when it rang again for the first time in more than 50 years in the First Baptist Church's belfry during Black History Month. In September, the bell was transported to Washington, D.C., for President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama to ring during the dedication of the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture on the National Mall.

## DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Thanks to Mary and Clint Gilliland's gift to support the purchase of a scanning electron microscope, the Foundation's Conservation Department can now better understand the elemental makeup of artifacts in fundamentally important ways to enable the best choices for their preservation and conservation.



# DAILY DISCOVERY:

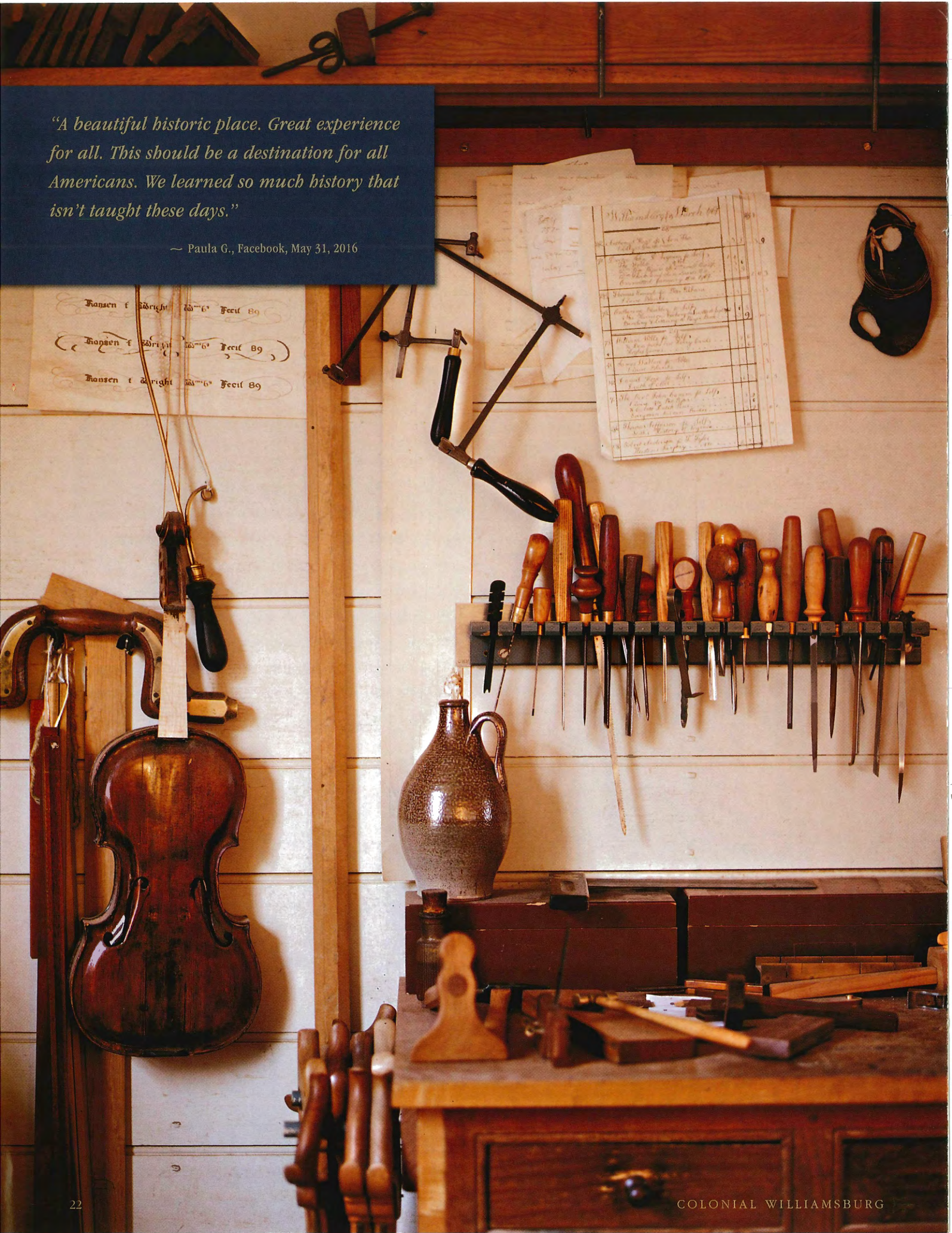
# LEARNING AND SHARING

## RESTORATION AND PRESERVATION

**BUILDING PRESERVATION PROJECT:** Structural paint and repair is not just a cosmetic fix: it is an important preservation tool for the finite, nonrenewable cultural resource of our historic structures. As new EPA directives have increased the requirement to remove paint toxins, the durability and longevity of the building maintenance life cycle has decreased to 10 years. With 602 Historic Area buildings in our care, we had fallen short in recent years of our goal to paint and repair 60 buildings a year. But in 2016, the Foundation was able to get back on track by painting and repairing a record 139 buildings.

**BLOCK RESTORATIVE LANDSCAPE INITIATIVE:** To contend with serious erosion issues that were blocking storm drains and killing trees through exposed roots, a pilot restoration project was developed along one block of Duke of Gloucester Street. The new stone curb, ground irrigation, sidewalk restoration, and new trees and grass will serve as a model for future restoration projects throughout the Historic Area.

*To learn more about current museum exhibitions or to make a gift to support our museums, preservation or restoration projects, visit history.org*



*"A beautiful historic place. Great experience for all. This should be a destination for all Americans. We learned so much history that isn't taught these days."*

— Paula G., Facebook, May 31, 2016

# FINANCIAL RESULTS

## Statement of Financial Position

The Foundation's total assets of $1.1 billion as of December 31, 2016 were lower by 3.7% than the prior year. Net assets of $647 million decreased by $69 million in 2016, reflecting slightly better operating results, offset by low returns on investments and the annual draws for operations from the Endowment.

## Operating Results

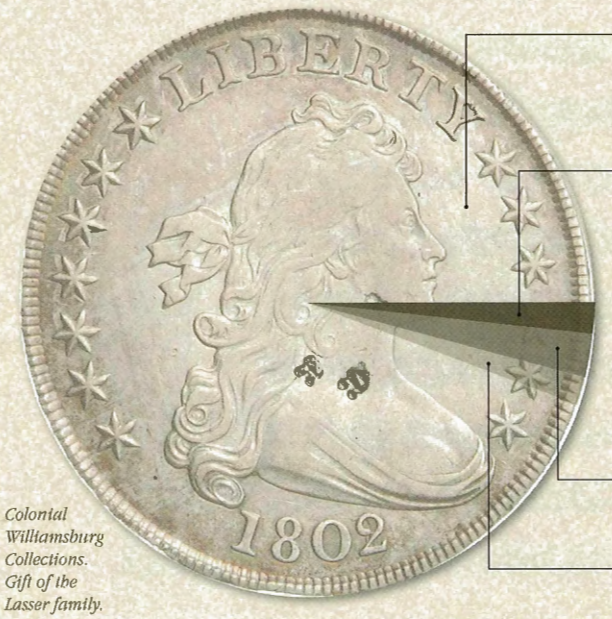
Total revenues for 2016 were $4 million higher than in 2015. Operating revenues, which include admission ticket sales, hotel and restaurant revenues, retail sales, and rental of commercial and residential real estate in and around the Historic Area, were $2 million lower than in 2015 reflecting a 6% decline in merchandise revenue. In 2016, Gifts and Grants other than the Colonial Williamsburg Fund were $24 million, reflecting strong donor support of Colonial Williamsburg's mission. Total revenues for the calendar year, including budgeted endowment support, were $229 million.

Operating expenses for 2016 of $227 million were slightly lower than the prior year, reflecting savings in major expense line items that offset investments in staffing and preservation maintenance.

## Looking Forward

In developing the Foundation's 2017 financial plan, the goal has been on fiscal discipline balanced with strategic investment and innovative program development throughout Colonial Williamsburg. In the spring and summer of 2017 we will re-open the Williamsburg Inn and the Golden Horseshoe Gold Course, following significant renovations and upgrades. We will also, in the spring, break ground for the expansion of the DeWitt Wallace Art museum. This two-year project will result in a much-expanded exhibit space, more up-to-date technology, and a new and inviting entrance.

## Sources of Giving 2007-2016



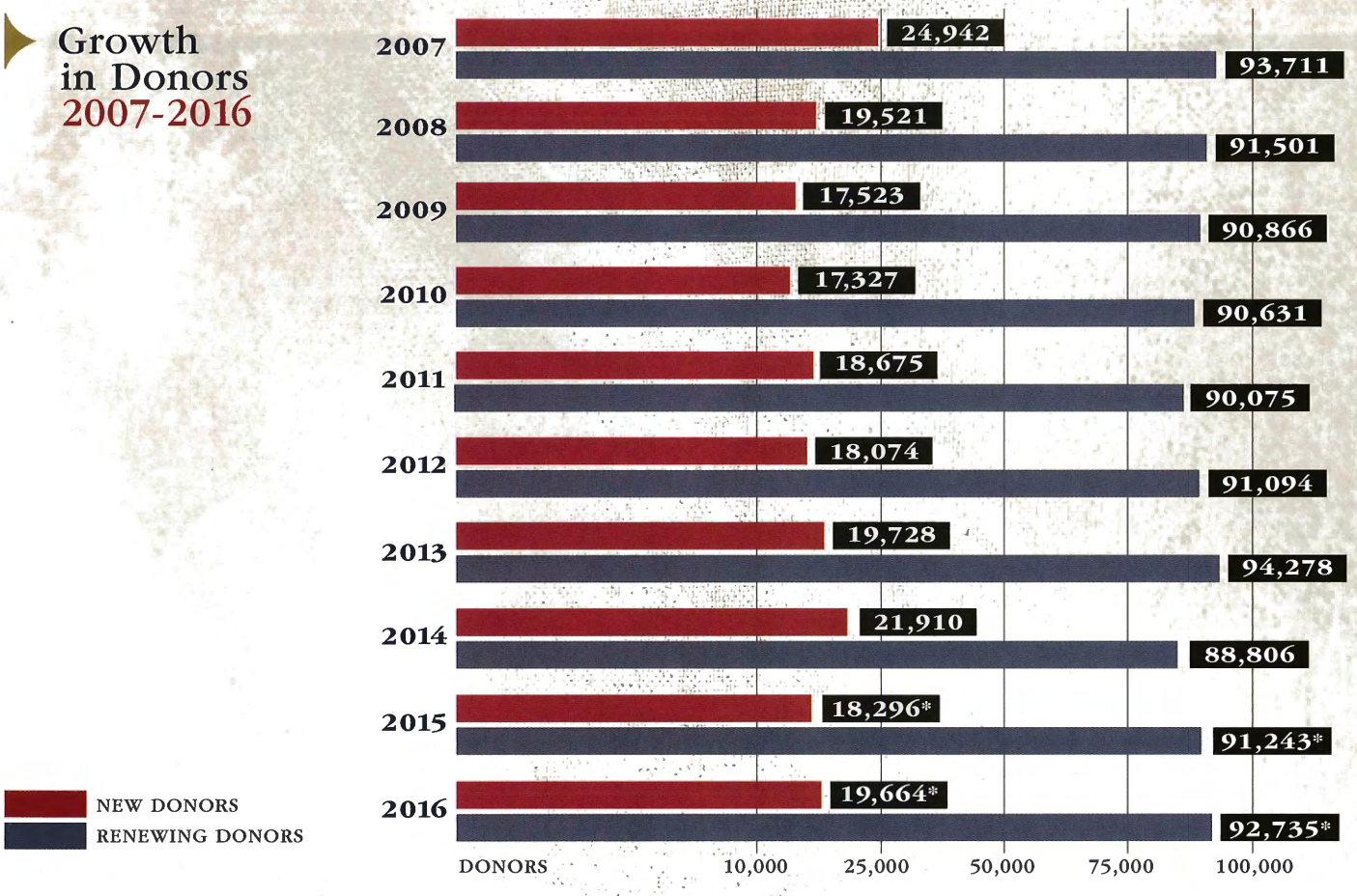

Colonial Williamsburg Collections. Gift of the Lasser family.




*The Foundation hit quarterly and annual financial targets for the second straight year.*

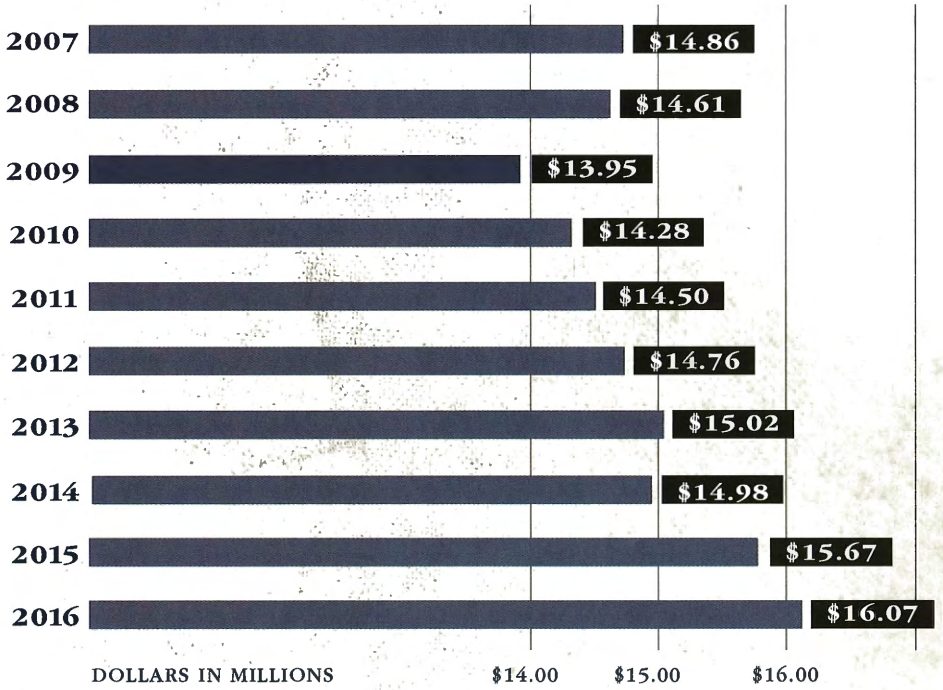
# FINANCIAL RESULTS

## Growth in Donors 2007-2016




** 2015 and 2016 donor totals do not include donations made with purchases.*

## Growth in Colonial Williamsburg Fund 2007-2016

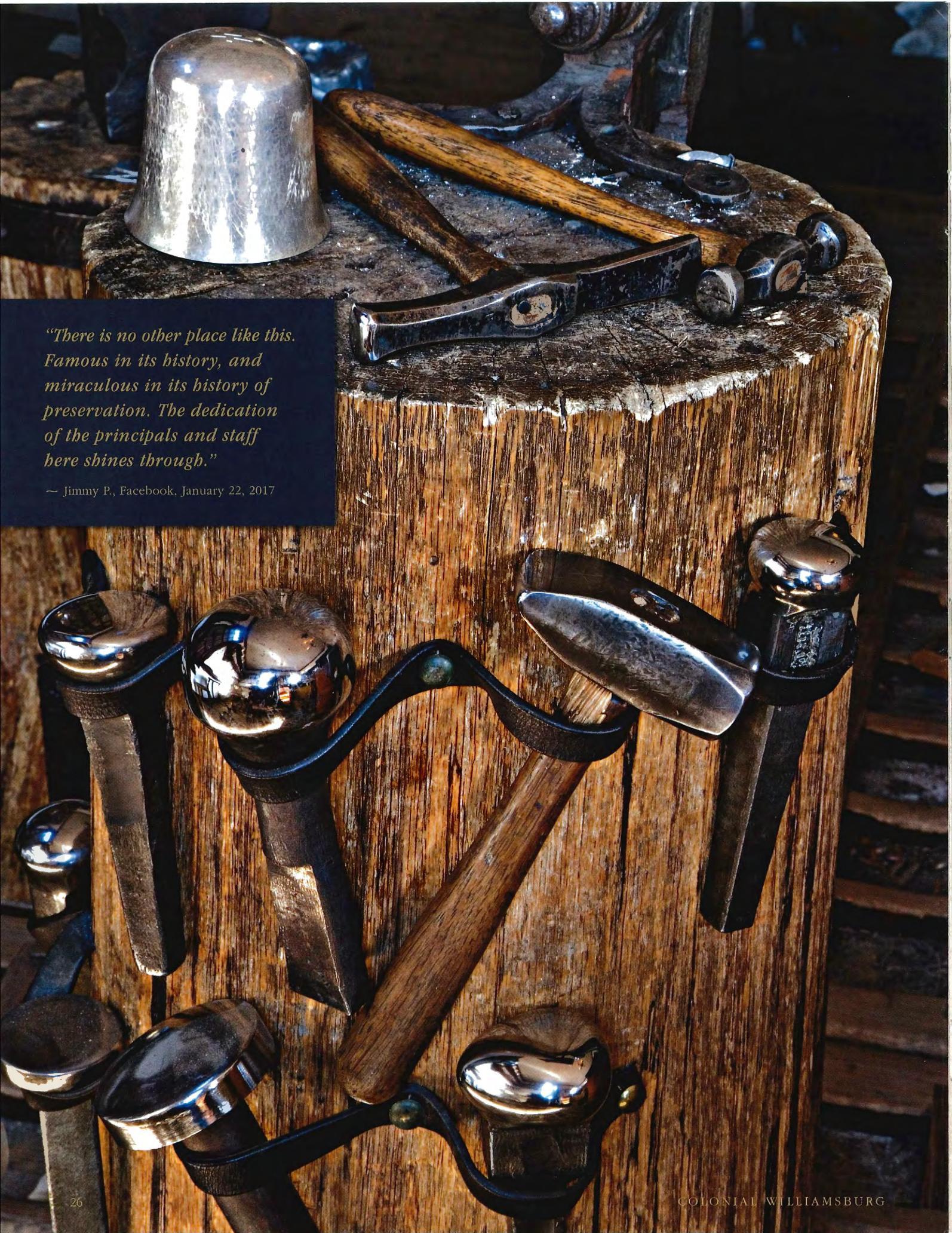


## Condensed Consolidated Statements of Financial Position As of December 31, 2016 and 2015 *(dollars in millions)*

| | 2016 ACTUAL $ | 2015 ACTUAL $ |
|---|---|---|
| ASSETS | | |
| Cash and Temporary Investments | $ 20 | $ 11 |
| Other Current Assets | 22 | 22 |
| TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS | 42 | 33 |
| Fixed Assets, Net | 308 | 307 |
| Investments | 664 | 713 |
| Other Assets | 49 | 22 |
| TOTAL ASSETS | $1,063 | $1,104 |
| LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS | | |
| Current Liabilities (excluding debt) | 32 | 31 |
| Debt | 317 | 308 |
| Other Non-Current Liabilities | 67 | 49 |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES | 416 | 388 |
| Net Assets | 647 | 716 |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS | $1,063 | $1,104 |

## Condensed Consolidated Statements of Operations and Changes in Net Assets for the twelve months ended December 31, 2016 and 2015 *(dollars in millions)*

| | 2016 ACTUAL $ | 2015 ACTUAL $ |
|---|---|---|
| REVENUES | | |
| Operating revenues | 118 | 120 |
| Colonial Williamsburg Fund | 16 | 16 |
| Gifts and grants | 24 | 19 |
| Annual endowment withdrawal for operations | 71 | 70 |
| TOTAL REVENUES | 229 | 225 |
| TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES | 227 | 228 |
| Operating surplus (deficit) | 2 | -3 |
| NON-OPERATING REVENUES AND EXPENSES AND OTHER CHANGES IN NET ASSETS | | |
| Endowment investment income, realized and unrealized gains/(losses) used for non-operating purposes or retained in endowment | -53 | -55 |
| Change in post-retirement benefits | -18 | -4 |
| Other | - | 4 |
| Change in net assets | -69 | -58 |
| NET ASSETS at beginning of year | 716 | 774 |
| NET ASSETS at end of year | 647 | 716 |



*"There is no other place like this. Famous in its history, and miraculous in its history of preservation. The dedication of the principals and staff here shines through."*

— Jimmy P., Facebook, January 22, 2017

COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG

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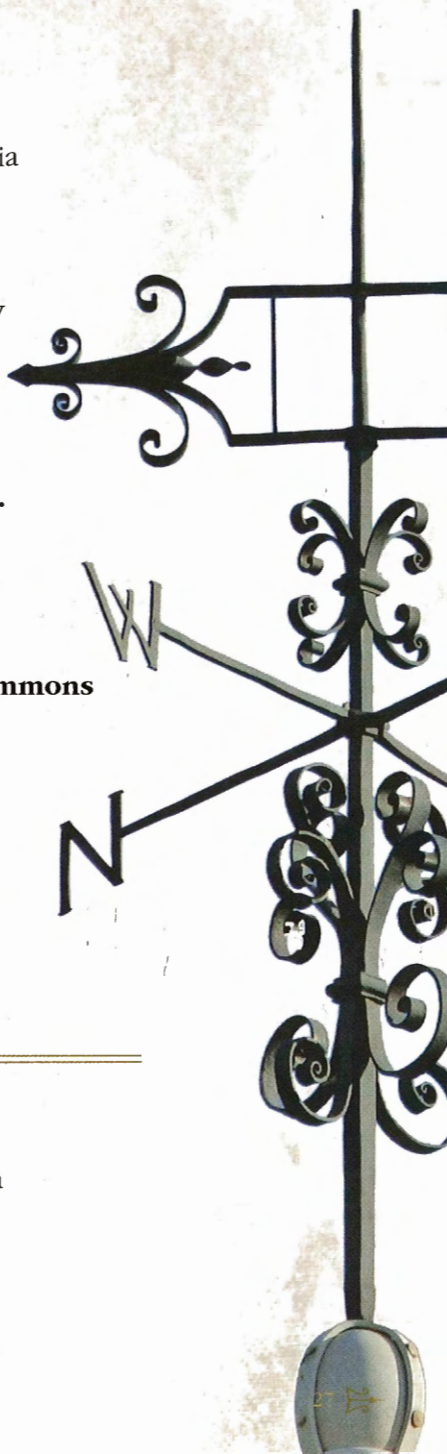


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# THANK YOU

Thanks to the passion and commitment of our donors, employees, volunteers and local community, the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation had another remarkable year. The stories throughout this report are a testament to the incredible generosity of each and every person who contributed their time, resources and talent to this extraordinary institution.

TO FEED
THE HUMAN
SPIRIT
BY SHARING
AMERICA'S
ENDURING
STORY

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